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NEWS RELEASE

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Idaho Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisors Awarded 2009 Grant Funding by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

BOISE ID (April 3, 2009) – The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) today announced funding to the Idaho Department of Insurance office of Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) to help Medicare beneficiaries in Idaho get more information about their healthcare choices.

SHIBA will receive \$290.920 as part of the nearly \$36 million being distributed to state health insurance assistance programs today.

"SHIBA plays an important role in providing information and support to people with Medicare in Idaho," said CMS' Acting Administrator, Charlene Frizzera. "The passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provides an opportunity for SHIBA to build upon its existing referral network and partners. Working collaboratively with state and local governments, community-based organizations and other partners to help meet the needs, beyond healthcare, of our Medicare population will be crucial."

CMS expects SHIBA to use the 2009 funding to conduct targeted community-based outreach to an increasing number and diversity of beneficiaries who may be unable to access other sources of information.

Idaho seniors benefitted from prior grant funding which was used to implement a computer access program called PC Possible. SHIBA's funding provided computers and internet access for 80 new counseling locations. This program has created greater access to one-on-one counseling for current and newly eligible beneficiaries, as well as reaching people who are most likely eligible for Medicare's low income subsidy and who may benefit from lower prescription drug costs.

Idaho's SHIBA program has been rated among the nation's top ten best performing state health insurance assistance programs for the past two years.

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